
PLANNING STATEMENT

Development at:

Land at South Side,
Steeple Aston

December 2017

Prepared by:

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Rectory Homes Ltd in support of a full planning application for the erection of 6 dwellings on land at South Side, Steeple Aston.

1.2 The description of development comprises the following:

'Erection of 6 no. two-storey residential dwellings with access off South Side, including parking and garaging, landscaping and all enabling and ancillary works.'

1.3 The application site comprises a field, rectangular in shape, and bound to the north, east and west by hedgerows and to the south by a post and wire fence. Existing residential dwellings are present to the east of the application site and a telephone exchange site is located to the west.

1.4 It is located within the Village of Steeple Aston, approximately eight miles west of the centre of Bicester, in the administrative area of Cherwell District Council.

1.5 In support of this planning application and in addition to the detailed architectural drawings, a number of technical documents and plans have been prepared which have informed the development of the proposal. The planning application comprises the following documents:

- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Elevations and Floor Plans
- Street Scenes
- Phase 1 Ecology Habitat Survey
- Topographical Survey
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- FRA and Drainage Strategy
- Tree Survey

1.6 The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate how the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the development plan, together with national planning guidance. Section 2 of this statement describes the application site and its surrounding area, whilst Section 3 explores the planning history of the site. Section 4 provides a detailed description of the proposal with the planning policy framework for the site identified in Section 5. Section 6 identifies the main planning considerations with Section 7 providing a summary and conclusion.

2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site comprises 0.93 ha of land located on the south eastern edge of the village of Steeple Aston. The site itself is currently uncultivated agricultural land with the immediately adjoining land being arable fields. There is a small area of existing hardstanding on the site which is used for agricultural storage. The topography of the site is largely level with no notable features.
- 2.2 Access to the site is provided via South Side which is adopted public highway. The road is of a sufficient width to accommodate two way vehicle movements.
- 2.3 Immediately north of the site is South Side with residential properties and associated gardens beyond that. Residential properties are found directly east of the site. The west of the site is bordered by scattered trees and a garage while an arable field exists immediately to the south.
- 2.4 Within the village, no single dominant architectural style of house type exists with both traditional stone built cottages, red brick dwellings, and a 1970s constructed housing estate.
- 2.5 The village is classified as a Category A village in the adopted Local Plan, which are considered rural service centres. Within the village there is a public house, village shop, post office, pre-school, village hall and a sports and recreation club and pitch.
- 2.6 The application site is considered to occupy an accessible location with it well connected to public transport services including the S4 bus route stopping in the village every hour between 06.30 and 18.00 which runs between Banbury and Oxford. It is then possible to connect to a number of other local / major service centres from these destinations. The daily Thames Travel service number 25 runs between Bicester and Kidlington and the 25A between Bicester and Oxford, which stops in the neighbouring village of Lower Heyford.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 This section of the statement provides an overview of the relevant planning history to this application site.
- 3.2 As part of this application, a planning history search of Cherwell District Council's online planning records has been undertaken on the site. There is no planning history for the application site. The key applications relating to the adjacent site are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Planning History of the adjacent site

Application Reference	Description of Development	Decision	Date of Decision
07/02561/F	Demolition of workshop and erection of 1 no. dwelling with workshop.	Refused and appeal dismissed	January 2008
11/01437/F	Variation of Condition 9 of CHN. 63/92	Granted	November 2011
13/00297/F	Change of use to light commercial for restoration and maintaining of collectable vehicles	Granted	April 2013
14/00309/DISC	Discharge of Condition 2 of 14/00764/F	Permitted	October 2014
14/00764/F	Retrospective erection of 2.4m high fence to enclose workshop and land.	Permitted	October 2014

- 3.3 The application for one dwelling in 2007 was dismissed at appeal because the Inspector felt that the dwelling would result in an intrusive form of development in the countryside. The inspector also felt that the proposed design would not reflect locally distinctive traditional forms which are characterised by narrow spanned buildings with steep roof pitches.
- 3.4 Our proposal on the adjacent site to the east is located adjacent to the existing dwellings on South Side and has sought to overcome these design concerns. The site layout has been designed so that it reflects the existing building lines

of the residential properties in this part of the village which is an established linear pattern. The scheme has been designed to reflect predominant characteristics of the village, namely two storey cottage style properties.

- 3.5 In light of the time that has passed, it is important to note that the Cherwell District Council Local Plan has been adopted (2015) since and the Mid-Cherwell neighbourhood plan is being progressed. The application site has been included within the settlement boundary as part of the proposed draft of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan and as such the policy position of the site has changed in that the principle of residential development is potentially acceptable in these defined areas.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 6 no. two-storey residential dwellings with access off South Side, including parking and garaging, landscaping and all enabling and ancillary works.
- 4.2 Vehicular access for the site will be provided via simple priority T-junction onto South Side to serve the scheme. This will replace the existing site access and will involve 6m junction radii and a 6m shared surface road. It will continue into the site and reduce in width to 4.8m. To the west of the site a 2.4 x90m visibility splay can be achieved, whilst a 2.4x43m visibility splay can be achieved to the east of the proposed access. An additional pedestrian access point will be provided onto South Side at the eastern extent of the site.
- 4.3 The dwellings will be of a high quality design and will include six four bedroom dwellings. They will be constructed of good quality Cotswold Stone.
- 4.4 Parking is proposed by the provision of garages to each plots, with parking also available on the driveway if necessary. A total of 20 parking spaces will be provided across the site.
- 4.5 The layout of the site has been designed to ensure the creation of an active frontage onto South Side, whilst within the site the properties are orientated to front onto the internal road network.
- 4.6 All of the properties are proposed to be provided with generous on plot amenity space mainly to the rear of each unit, with some frontage amenity provision as well. The majority of the existing hedgerow along the northern boundary will be maintained and reinforced to provide a physical screen to the neighbouring properties.
- 4.7 More detailed information on the design of the proposal is contained in the Design and Access Statement, whilst the following accompanying plans illustrate the detail of the proposal:
- Site Location Plan
 - Site Plan
 - Elevations and Floorplans

- Street Elevations
- Materials Plan

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 This section of the Statement considers the relevant planning policy framework for the site and surrounding area, having regard to the development proposal. It considers the statutory development plan, emerging local planning policy guidance and national planning policy as set out in the NPPF and NPPG.
- 5.2 Under the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, there is an obligation to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3 The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The NPPF provides an overarching framework for the production of local policy documents and the consideration of development proposals. At the heart of the framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision making.
- 5.4 Contained within the NPPF are a set of twelve core land use planning principles which for decision taking means the Local Authority should:
- *Approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;*
 - *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted.*
- 5.5 The NPPF sets out that the Government expects the planning system to deliver homes, businesses, and infrastructure and improve local places whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Paragraph 17 sets out that the planning system should proactively drive and

support sustainable development to deliver the new homes that the country needs.

- 5.6 Paragraph 47 identifies measures to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'. Local plans should meet the objectively assessed need for housing in that area, whilst Local Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5%. Where a record of persistent under delivery exists, Local Planning Authorities should increase this buffer to 20%.
- 5.7 Paragraph 49 states; *'Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.'*
- 5.8 Paragraph 55 states; *'to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'*.
- 5.9 In terms of design considerations in the NPPF, paragraph 56 states that great importance should be attached to the design of the built environment and should contribute positively to making places better for people, paragraph 57 states that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces.

Development Plan

- 5.10 Within the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), the following specific saved policies have been identified as being relevant to the proposal:
- PSD 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) – States that The Council will always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible,

and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

- BSC 4 (Housing Mix) – States new residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed and inclusive communities.
- ESD 13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement) – Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.
- ESD 15 (The Character of the Built and Historic Environment) – New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design.
- Policy Villages 1 (Village Categorisation) – States that only Category A (Service Centres) and Category B (Satellite Villages) will be considered suitable for minor development in addition to infilling and conversion. Steeple Aston in a Category ‘A’ village and as such is a suitable village for minor development (up to 10 dwellings).
- Policy Villages 2 (Distributing Growth across the Rural Areas) – Requires a total of 750 homes to be delivered at Category A villages. This will be in addition to the rural allowances for small site ‘windfalls’ and planning permissions for 10 or more dwellings as at 31 March 2014.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1): Partial Review- Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need

- 5.11 The Council is in the process of partially reviewing the existing local plan Part 1 in light of Oxford’s unmet housing need.
- 5.12 The proposed submission plan was published in July 2017 and consultation ran from 17 July until 10 October 2017. Given its current status, the plan is not currently a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Mid- Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.13 The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood area was designated on 7th April 2015. The Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared and the pre-submission consultation took place for six weeks until September 19th 2017.
- 5.14 The draft Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood plan does not allocate sites for housing.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Building In Harmony with the Environment (1998)

- 5.15 The Council's parking guidelines for development in terms of site layouts, road layouts, landscaping and building form are set out within this SPG.

Countryside Design Summary (1998)

- 5.16 This guidance suggests that new development should reflect the landscape setting of the villages by not encroaching beyond and topographical, visual or environmental limits. It continues by stating that within linear villages development should emphasise the existing street pattern by limiting backland development. The proposal reflects these points by retaining the linear pattern along South Side.

6.0 Planning Considerations

- 6.1 This section of the statement seeks to address the key planning issues considered to arise from the proposal. Such issues have been identified through a review of the planning policy framework that applies, together with an analysis of the local context of the site.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 An initial consideration is as to whether Steeple Aston represents a sustainable location for growth. The village is classified as a Category A village which are considered rural service centres offering a good range of facilities and services. Given this, a modest level of housing growth is considered acceptable through minor development, infilling and the conversion of buildings.

- 6.3 Policy Villages 1 of the adopted Local Plan identifies the most sustainable villages (Steeple Aston included) where minor development within built up limits will, in principle, be supported. The policy suggests that typically a site of less than 10 dwellings would be classed as minor development. In conclusion, Steeple Aston is identified as a sustainable location for development and our proposal for six dwellings would constitute minor development.

- 6.4 Whilst the adopted Cherwell Local Plan does not set out any settlement boundaries for individual villages, the draft Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan maps the settlement area of each village within the plan. The map for Steeple Aston shows the proposed site within the defined settlement boundary where minor residential development is potentially acceptable.

Impact upon Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.5 The planning policies of the Cherwell District Local Plan and NPPF require that development should, in its design, scale, form and appearance, respect and reflect the local built context and fit comfortably within its surroundings and local vicinity.
- 6.6 The development form of the village consists of linear development along South Side, Paines Hill and North Side with pockets of nucleated development. Given that

the proposed site is located in a section of South Side which is characterised by linear development, the proposed linear scheme would adhere to the pattern of development in the vicinity.

- 6.7 It is noted that the proposed site is adjacent to the Steeple Aston Conservation Area (which lies north of the site). The scheme has been designed so as to reflect the predominant characteristics of the locality which include two storey dwellings on relatively generous plots. The proposed development density at 6.45 dwellings per hectare is in keeping with the area and appropriate to an edge of village location.
- 6.8 The proposed properties have been designed to a traditional form with pitched roofs, chimney stacks, simple façade and a number of detailed architectural features. The Cotswold stone to be used in the construction of the properties will be appropriate to the locality and of a high quality although exact detail is expected to be agreed via condition.
- 6.9 The scale and massing of the units has been designed to reflect and be in keeping with the local character. The properties have been aligned where possible to face onto the public highway and provide an active frontage along South Side. This continues the established development form that already exists along South Side. Landscaping has been included along the frontage with the highway to retain and maintain the existing hedgerow where possible. Overall, the scheme is considered of a quality that will preserve and enhance the character of the area.

Residential Amenity

- 6.10 The layout and design of the site has been carefully planned to ensure that the amenity of those existing residential properties in the locality is preserved, whilst the proposed dwellings achieve a high quality amenity for future occupants. The layout and orientation of the proposed dwellings on site would cause no harm to existing occupiers of neighbouring dwellings to the east or north by way of overlooking or being overbearing through careful design and orientation of the dwellings.
- 6.11 As well as the existing properties adjacent and adjoining the site, the development has also been designed so as to ensure that future occupiers of the proposed dwellings also enjoy a high quality living environment. This includes designing the

dwellings so as to avoid potential overlooking concerns, light levels, outlook and the provision of private outdoor amenity space for each dwelling.

- 6.12 In respect of amenity space, each dwelling has been provided with a rear garden which are approximately 24m in depth. These will provide a private open space for future residents, an important element of the scheme, given the properties are family proportioned units. As well as the rear gardens, each unit also has a limited front garden area.

Drainage

- 6.13 In accordance with planning guidance, a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement has been submitted in support of the application. This document assesses the risk of flooding from all sources to the development and as a result of the development.
- 6.14 The risk of the development to flooding from all sources has been considered. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, the area considered least at risk to flood events, and as such is suitable for residential development.
- 6.15 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) include measures to manage runoff to mimic surface water flows prior to the development and taking into account climate change, such that any increase in runoff is mitigated and flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 6.16 It is proposed that all surface water runoff from roofs and hardstanding areas including driveways and the site access road is discharged via a combination of permeable block paving and cellular soakaways located in rear gardens.
- 6.17 The system is designed to accommodate a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event (i.e. the additional capacity is added to accommodate a 40% increase in storm intensity due to climate change).
- 6.18 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy demonstrates that the site is at low risk of flooding and the proposed drainage design will replicate greenfield conditions, taking account of climate change, such not to increase the

risk of flooding elsewhere. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable on drainage grounds.

Ecology

- 6.19 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site has been undertaken to identify any potential ecological constraints and opportunities on the site.
- 6.20 The appraisal has assessed that all parts of the proposed application site are either negligible or low local value for ecology given that the habitats and features supported are very common and of low botanical and fauna diversity.
- 6.21 The report confirms that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on statutory or non-statutory sites. Further works have been recommended for a reptile presence/ absence survey and the inclusion of native planting to mitigate for any hedgerow removal. Given the extent of the habitats onsite even if reptiles were discovered onsite, an onsite mitigation solution is entirely achievable.
- 6.22 The report concludes that any potential adverse impacts from the proposed development upon specific protected species/habitats can be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy.

Trees

- 6.23 An Arboricultural report has been undertaken to identify any potential tree constraints at the site and protection measures during the construction phase.
- 6.24 The site layout and positioning of the access have incorporated the findings of the Arboricultural Report produced by Sylva Consultancy and as a result the trees of highest value have been retained. It is proposed to only remove two trees to the front of the site in order to create the access. These two trees are category C and are of low quality with limited remaining life expectancy.

Highways, Access and Parking

- 6.25 Access to the dwellings will be via Southside with one cul-de-sac proposed to serve the six residential properties. Southside is a public highway through Steeple Aston connecting the A4260 (Oxford Road) with Heyford Road.
- 6.26 Vehicular access for the site will be provided via a simple priority T-junction onto South Side to serve the scheme. This will replace the existing site access and will involve 6m junction radii and a 6m shared surface road. It will continue into the site and reduce in width to 4.8m. To the west of the site a 2.4 x90m visibility splay can be achieved, whilst a 2.4x43m visibility splay can be achieved to the east of the proposed access. An additional pedestrian access point will be provided onto South Side at the eastern extent of the site.
- 6.27 Each property within the proposed scheme is to be provided with its own dedicated onsite parking within its curtilage. The proposed level of parking complies with the Council's adopted parking standards with 20 parking spaces provided across the site. Each property will be provided with at least 2 parking spaces, with adequate space for additional parking on driveways. In respect of these matters, the parking and access arrangements are considered to be acceptable and consistent with relevant policy.
- 6.28 It is proposed that refuse collections will take place within the site and as shown in the accompanying Transport Statement, a swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate that it is accessible by refuse vehicle and that the vehicle is able to turn within the site and exit in forward gear.

Inclusive Access

- 6.29 In accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations, the scheme has been designed to ensure inclusive access. This will include level thresholds to principal external doors of the proposed dwellings and where possible, hallways and doors of a size to enable full wheelchair access and movement. This will ensure that those with mobility limitations are able to fully access the proposed dwellings and the scheme is policy compliant in ensuring that it will be fully accessible.

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application made by Rectory Homes Ltd for 6 residential units on land south of Southside, Steeple Aston. The site lies on the western edge of Steeple Aston and currently comprises uncultivated land.
- 7.2 The planning layout, elevations, floorplans and supporting documents submitted with this application demonstrate how a high quality development can be accommodated on the site which contributes to local distinctiveness and forms an integrated and logical extension to the village.
- 7.3 The application site is located in a Category A, Service Village which is suitable for minor development, infilling and conversions. It is within the defined settlement boundary of the village where this scale of development has been defined as acceptable. It is an accessible site with a range of services and facilities either within the village or accessible by public transport.
- 7.4 In relation to the established dimensions of sustainable development, the proposal would represent an economic benefit through the construction phase of the development and increase in local expenditure through the resultant population increase. As far the social aspect is concerned, it would result in the delivery of additional family housing in a sustainable location and in a relatively quick timeframe. In terms of environmental factors, the development will deliver ecological enhancements through mitigation measures proposed onsite.
- 7.5 The scheme proposes to erect six sensitively-designed dwellings that reinforce the local vernacular and result in an improvement to the existing village edge.
- 7.6 Accompanying the planning application are a number of specialist technical reports which serve to demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to any significant adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of providing additional housing in a sustainable location. More specifically, matters of ecology, highways, drainage and arboriculture have been assessed and considered not to form a constraint to the future development of the site. The benefits of the proposed development are

therefore considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts.

- 7.7 In light of the above factors, it is considered that the proposal accords with the provisions of the NPPF in that it represents a sustainable form of development with no major adverse impacts.